



InTouch

April 2005

Volume Ten - Number Five



Bernard Woodard receives Employee of the Year award. (L-R) County Executive Duncan, Warden W.L. Smith, Bernard Woodard, Human Resources Director Joe Adler.

Community Outreach at Department of Correction and Rehabilitation

Not many people know that Montgomery County operates a jail. Before the new Correctional Facility in Boyds was opened in 2003, inmates were housed at the Detention Center on Seven Locks Road in Rockville. The Boyds facility now houses approximately 700 inmates while the Detention Center in Rockville now operates mainly as a receiving and discharging center for individuals awaiting arraignment or those who have completed their sentences and are ready for release.

The Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Boyds houses inmates whose sentences are shorter than 18 months. Local confinement at Boyds, rather than in a state prison, is normally available only to defendants whose crimes are less severe and who have demonstrated the need to be close to family in the county or who would benefit from the rehabilitation opportunities offered at the Correctional Facility.

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Office of Community Outreach Events

The County Executive's Office of Community Outreach is hosting several upcoming events. All events are free and open to the public. You are invited to attend and participate in any or all of them.

Muslim Women in the Arts

Throughout the month of April, an exhibit of works inspired by Islamic culture created by women artists from the area will be held in the Lobby Level gallery in the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville.

An open house and reception at the same location is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2005 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. The formal program on April 26 will feature the artists who place their works on loan to the County, poetry recitations by Samar Najia and Siham Eldadah and a slide show presentation by Leila Kubba. Ms. Kubba's slide show includes a talk on the influence of Sumerian mythology on Islamic art, as well as the Moorish influence on the art and architecture in the Andalusian region of Spain. The group Taqasim (Arabic for "Improvisation") will perform traditional and contemporary Arabic music. Led by Seifed-Din Abdoum and Christina Campo-Abdoum and joined by Jenny Lee, Taqasim was formerly known as The Sahara Ensemble.

This will be the sixth annual Muslim Women in the Arts (MWIA) event, which features works produced by women artists who were inspired by Islamic culture. Members come from all walks of life and represent many ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and nations of origin. Most live in Montgomery County but some hail from other parts of the world, including some who travel back and forth to Turkey, Canada, England, Germany, former states of the Soviet Union and even Washington DC. Some have Arabic heritage, others are Pakistani, while others are

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Message from the County Executive



DOUGLAS M. DUNCAN

Dear Friends:

The Office of Community Outreach (OCO) continues its excellent outreach efforts and program sponsorship. I invite you to attend and participate in any or all of the upcoming events, including Muslim Women in the Arts, My Proud Culture: Understanding Diversity Through the Arts, Arab American Heritage Month, an open forum in conjunction with Asian Pacific American Heritage, Juneteenth celebration and a fair housing education forum on predatory lending and other unscrupulous financial transactions involving homeowners. These and other OCO programs and events provide educational opportunities about all communities for all communities. For information, please see the article on Page 1 or call (240) 777-2500.

Recently, my staff negotiated with the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to ensure that applicants for driver's licenses who are protected under the federal Temporary Protective Status (TPS) program are not rejected because of outdated information. In March, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services extended TPS status under an existing program for immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. After hearing that some applications were rejected because of the applicants' visa information, we worked with DMV officials to successfully negotiate an agreement. The visas of TPS protected immigrants will now be honored by DMV. It is in everyone's interest to make sure that eligible applicants are able to obtain a driver's license hassle-free. I thank DMV for its valuable cooperation.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all individuals who serve on one of Montgomery County's boards, committees and commissions. These individuals allows all our departments and agencies to have input from residents and allows our programs to be more inclusive. Please call Kathy Zieger at (240) 777-2528 for more information about serving on a board, commission or committee.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer
Parker Hamilton, Assistant CAO

Office of Community Outreach:

Debbie Resnick, Manager

Shu-Ping Chan, Asian Pacific American Liaison

Tina Clarke, African American/Black Liaison

Joe Heiney-Gonzalez, Latino/Hispanic Liaison

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Submissions, comments and event announcements can be emailed to:

InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov. Those received by the first of March, June, September or December will be considered for the next issue of *In Touch*. Articles may be reproduced or translated into other languages with attribution.

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Cameroonian Community Town Hall Meeting

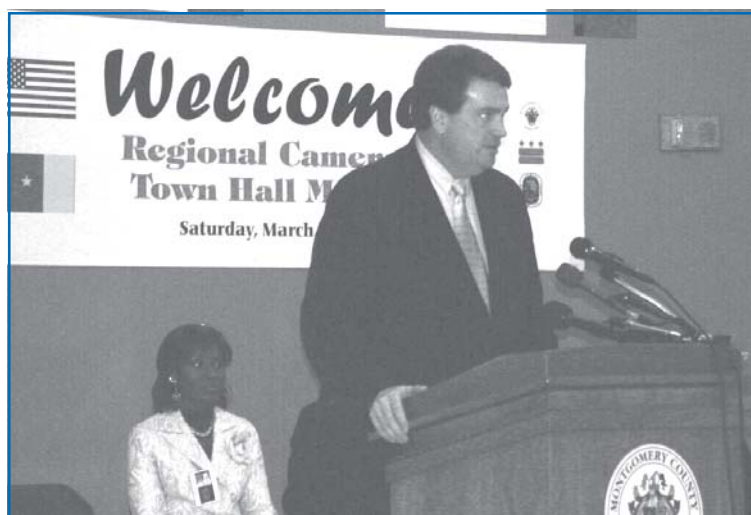


Photo by Chuck Crisostomo

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan addresses audience at Cameroonian Town Hall Meeting on March 12, 2005.

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan hosted a regional town hall meeting on March 12, 2005 for the Cameroonian community at Blair High School in Silver Spring to discuss community concerns and provide information about services. Also sponsoring the meeting were Prince George's County Executive Jack B. Johnson, Washington DC Mayor Anthony A. Williams and H.E. Jerome Mendouga, Ambassador from Cameroon to the United States.

As with any immigrant community, Cameroonians face challenges in acculturation and in accessing public services. The meeting was the first such forum for the community to discuss these issues and address community concerns, especially in critical areas as public safety and public health.

Many of the questions from the audience of 200 during the six-hour meeting addressed procedures and expectations during residents-police interactions. Perhaps prompted by the fatal shooting in August 2004 of community member Peter Njang by a Montgomery County police officer, questions focused on encounters with police and the actions and behaviors that would communicate to officers that a resident is being cooperative and non-threatening.

Residents mentioned that nonverbal factors in communications such as eye contact, volume of voice, rapidity of speech, arm and hand gestures and distance maintained between speaker and listener can convey vast differences in meaning in different cultures. The police panel urged residents, when interacting with police, to remain still, avoid sudden movements and not to approach police but to wait for the police to approach them.

Based on these community concerns, the County Executive, Chief Administrative Officer and Police Chief decided that the police department would host future educational seminars to provide answers to these and

other urgent questions on public safety.

The town hall meeting also provided a wealth of information to residents on public health, Montgomery County's prescription drug plan, the Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity, registering to vote, recreational activities, employment opportunities, business development and community outreach. Departments and agencies from all three jurisdictions used over 30 booths and displays to provide information to residents.

The meeting was a successful first step in the two way educational process where the community is learning more about available services and where service providers are learning more about the needs and concerns of Cameroonians. The regional and multi-departmental approach to convening the meeting is a good model for the future. For more information, please contact the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach at (240) 777-2500 or the Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity at (240) 777-4940.

New Information and Referral Line at HHS

Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently began a new service to provide easier access for all county residents to the department's 124 programs and services delivered through 19 separate locations. In designing the HHS Information and Referral Line, Director Carolyn Colvin wanted a call center where customers could reach a staff member who is able to immediately answer questions or direct calls to the appropriate service agency.

As an important aspect of excellent customer service, Director Colvin also commissioned staff to provide callers a "warm handoff" whenever possible. Rather than dropping a customer's call into a voice mailbox, Information and Referral specialists are trained to first reach a colleague from the appropriate service area who is able to handle the customer's inquiry before patching through the call. Under certain circumstances, specialists take on the role of advocates to ensure customers receive timely and accurate information about services or their cases.

Because callers can now access basic information and referrals to HHS programs and services by calling one telephone number, the Information Line has become a valuable customer service tool to help callers get off to a good working start with HHS. Many calls to the specialists are on basic information such as descriptions of services, where they are offered, who is eligible, how to apply and what to prepare for. Be-

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Coping with an Attack

The following is a quick guide developed by Montgomery County's Homeland Security Department (MCHSD) to deal with biological, chemical and radiological "dirty bomb" attacks.

A biological attack involves the spreading of live viruses or bacteria such as anthrax or smallpox intended to infect victims. A chemical attack involves the spreading of poisonous agents such as sarin or chlorine gas. A "dirty bomb" attack is the explosion of a conventional device inside or near nuclear materials that cause the spread of radiation.

Up to date information can be found on County Cable Montgomery (Channel 6), the County's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov or by calling the County's Bioterrorism Information Line at (240) 777-4200.

How to Prepare for a Biological Attack:

Before a biological attack:

- Stockpile 3 days of nonperishable food.
- Stockpile 3 days of water (3 gallons per person).
- Develop family contact plan on how to get in touch via phone, internet or other means.
- Stockpiling antibiotics is NOT recommended.
- Purchasing a gas mask is NOT recommended.

After a biological attack:

- If possible, stay at home.
- You have time after a biological attack – treatment, if needed, does not have to start immediately.
- Listen to local news.
- If needed, you will be told where to get medical treatment.
- Do NOT immediately rush to a hospital emergency room.

How to Prepare for a Chemical Attack:

Before a chemical attack:

- Stockpile 3 days of nonperishable food.
- Stockpile 3 days of water (3 gallons per person).
- Develop family contact plan on how to get in touch via phone, internet or other means.
- Purchasing a gas mask is NOT recommended.

After a chemical attack:

- IMMEDIATELY leave the chemical attack area.

- IMMEDIATELY remove contaminated clothing.
- Take a shower or flush with water if you were exposed.
- Avoid puddles of liquid.
- Chemical clouds blow away quickly.
- Do NOT immediately rush to a hospital emergency room unless you have breathed in chemical fumes or have contamination on your skin.

How to Prepare for a "Dirty Bomb" Attack:

Before a "dirty bomb" attack:

- Stockpile 3 days of nonperishable food.
- Stockpile 3 days of water (3 gallons per person).
- Develop family contact plan on how to get in touch via phone, internet or other means.
- Stockpiling antibiotics is NOT recommended.
- Purchasing potassium iodide tablets, a Geiger Counter or a gas mask is NOT recommended.

After a "dirty bomb" attack:

- You have time – the amount of radiation from a "dirty bomb" is unlikely to give you radiation sickness or cancer.
- Follow instructions of emergency personnel.
- Leave the area by foot. Do NOT use public transportation so contaminated vehicles can be avoided.
- If exposed, do NOT lick or touch your lips, eat, drink or smoke until experts have decontaminated you.
- Do NOT immediately rush to a hospital emergency room.

Information and Referral Line *from page 3*

cause of the critical nature of many HHS services, customers need immediate answers to their questions. The department provides safety net services and critical protection for many county residents including health care for the uninsured, mental health services, childcare subsidy programs, emergency financial assistance, immunizations, child protection, addiction services and programs that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

In addition to first time customers, the Information Line also serves as an additional resource and point of access for current customers who may need to speak with an employee, obtain more information or have a question about their particular situation. In addition, the Information Line connects other county departments, private agencies and even HHS employees to the host of services and programs provided by the department. Initial reports indicate that the program is accomplishing its mission and the feedback has been very positive.

Trained Information and Referral specialists answer calls to the Information Line Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Calls received after hours are directed to the County's 24-Hour Crisis Center. In addition to English, specialists speak Chinese, Hindi, Spanish and Urdu. Calls from residents speaking other languages are immediately patched to the Language Line, a commercial dialup service contracted by the County that provides instantaneous interpretations over the telephone through a three-way conversation with a trained interpreter.

The Department of Health and Human Services Information and Referral Line number is (240) 777-1245. The TTY number is (240) 777-1295.

Gordon Aoyagi Leads New County Department

Gordon Aoyagi is making history as the first director of the Montgomery County Homeland Security Department (MCHSD). But he also made history in his previous position as the first and only civilian Fire Administrator in the County to head the combined career and volunteer fire and rescue service.

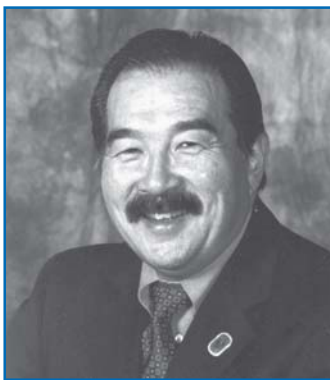
At Fire and Rescue, Gordon initiated many changes to enhance operations, including updating the master plan that built five new fire stations and introducing new technology to improve communications as well as enhancing special operations. As in most jurisdictions of equivalent size, Montgomery County now has a uniformed chief who commands both career and volunteer firefighters. Gordon was instrumental in the legislation that established this new authority.

Now at his new job directing MCHSD, Gordon is working to fulfill the department's mission to plan, prevent, prepare and protect against all major hazards that may threaten, harm, disrupt or destroy our communities. MCHSD plans for and responds to natural disasters such as hurricanes as well as terrorist attacks.

As part of its prevention, preparation and mitigation responsibilities, the department coordinates intelligence from law enforcement and disease surveillance and maintains extensive plans for response and recovery from possible biological, chemical or radiological attacks.

During such emergencies, reliable interagency communications are critical to incident management systems of first responders and support by the Emergency Management Group (EMG). The EMG identifies and deploys needed resources and determines whether the County Executive should declare a state of emergency with subsequent declarations by Maryland's Governor and the President of the United States. Such declarations would activate state and federal resources and provide essential information to the public on emergency response procedures.

Recently, MCHSD was invited to showcase its homeland security technological applications at FOSE, the nation's largest technology convention for the public sector. The department was nominated for an award by FOSE's Homeland Security Center, which was quite an accomplishment given the department is only four months



Gordon Aoyagi
Homeland Security Director

old. The MCHSD display at FOSE included a slide show describing its work with the community during hurricanes and other emergencies. Multilingual informational brochures were distributed. In addition to Homeland Security, the County was represented by Health and Human Services and Technology Services.

Before his appointment as MCHSD director, Gordon spent over 30 years in public administration and public policy. Prior to his appointment as Fire Administrator, he served as Senior Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in the County Executive's office. His management duties there included labor relations; environmental, water and sewer polices; electrical service deregulation; public safety; special events and intergovernmental representation.

Gordon began his management career in public transportation. He was Division Chief for the Ride On bus service in Montgomery County. Before coming to the County in 1985, he served as general manager for mass transit in Salem, Oregon and in Westport, Connecticut.

Gordon holds a Bachelor's degree from Colorado College and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from University of Colorado. We wish Gordon the best of success in this new and critical position.

For a copy of Montgomery County's *Emergency Preparedness Guide* which provides information on how to prepare for and deal with natural disasters or terrorist attacks, please call (240) 777-6530. It is available in Cambodian, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Korean, Spanish and Russian.



Dave Allen of Technology Services and Annette Cheng of Homeland Security provide information at FOSE technology convention.

Community Outreach *from page 1*

All Correctional Facility inmates are required to enter rehabilitation programs. Its very name – Correction and Rehabilitation – stresses the department's mission to protect public safety while reducing recidivism by offering opportunities to detainees for self improvement and realizing the personal strengths they need to readjust to life after returning to the community.

Currently there are 535 professionals employed by the department. Staffing the department is a full time challenge that is met each day by E. Bernard Woodard who serves as Human Resources Recruitment Supervisor. He is responsible for all hiring in the department's five divisions: the Correctional Facility, the Detention Center, Pre-Trial Services, Pre-Release Services and Administrative Services.

In addition to uniformed correctional officers, the department hires nurses, mental health therapists, administrative staff, resident supervisors who manage pre-release services and correctional specialists who serve as case managers/counselors to help detainees transition back into the community.

Known for his fierce commitment to maintaining a workforce that reflects the population he serves, Director Arthur Wallenstein has charged Bernard with continuing his extensive outreach efforts to all communities, particularly those whose members speak a language in addition to English. Besides the language issue, Bernard battles cultural perceptions that disfavor work in the law enforcement or correctional systems. To overcome these perceptions, Bernard provides outreach and education not only to potential applicants but also to leaders and elders who may wield great influence in the community.

Public safety officers and professionals in related fields are critical to civilized society. Excellent employment opportunities exist in Correction and Rehabilitation, Fire and Rescue Services and the Department of Police. All of these departments provide paid training, excellent benefits, job security and a lot of room for advancement.

By recruiting multilingual and multicultural employees, Bernard not only facilitates smoother operations in the department but also brings in individuals who can become mentors and role models. Bernard knows this first hand because he began with the department in November 1982 as a correctional officer. He saw part of his job as someone who could share his life experiences and serve as a role model to those who were incarcerated. As a recruiter, Bernard is now looking for others like himself who can give back to community by working to rehabilitate one person at a time.

Bernard's current outreach and recruitment activities include placing Spanish ads in newspapers and on Ride On busses frequented by members of the Latino community. He will also place translated ads through local Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese media. Translated flyers to recruit for correctional officers are distributed throughout county. Bernard also makes presentations to

County Assists Immigrants Protected Under Temporary Protective Status

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS) of the federal Department of Homeland Security recently granted automatic extensions on Temporary Protective Status for immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua because of devastations to their homelands due to natural disasters.

The Temporary Protective Status (TPS) program was designated by the United States Department of Justice in 2001 to provide legal status for Salvadoran immigrants in the country at the time. Because earthquakes had devastated El Salvador, the federal government allowed Salvadorans on temporary visas to legally remain in the United States beyond their original visa expiration dates. TPS status was also granted to Honduran and Nicaraguan immigrants partly due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Isabel. The most recent extension of TPS status now allows immigrants from these three countries to legally remain in the U.S. until September 9, 2006.

As an important part of obtaining employment and exercising their constitutional right of freedom of travel, immigrants under TPS are eligible to obtain driver's licenses. However, soon after the recent extensions were granted by USCIS, some TPS protected immigrants applying for driver's licenses at the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) were turned away because their visas still had old expiration dates. After some negotiations with Montgomery County officials, DMV has announced that it will honor all applications from immigrants with TPS status.

For more information about the TPS program, please call Joe Heiney-Gonzalez at (240) 777-2500 or the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office at (800) 375-5283. Information can also be obtained at www.dhs.gov

community organizations and youth groups to talk about career opportunities. Within the County, Bernard represents his department on the Diversity Council and the Limited English Proficiency committee.

Bernard's excellent work earned him the Employee of the Year award from the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation in 2004. Recently, he was presented with the countywide Employee of the Year award at the Montgomery's Best Honor Awards ceremony. For more information about the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, please call (240) 777-9975.

Community Outreach Events *from page 1*

African or African American. The only criteria for membership to MWIA are interest in art and in Islamic culture. In fact, not all members of MWIA are Muslim. For more information or to reply for the April 26 reception, please call (240) 777-2521.

Understanding Diversity Through Arts

The County Executive, the Office of Community Outreach, the Committee for Ethnic Affairs and Montgomery County Public Schools are hosting the premier Understanding Diversity Through Arts program with a display in the Lobby Level of the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville from May 3 to May 31, 2005. Eighty students from six middle schools used their talents to create artworks based on the theme "My Proud Culture."

An open house and awards reception at the same location is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, 2005 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. The formal program will include presentations of awards to 15 students whose works were evaluated by a five judge panel. First Place, Second Place, Third Place and Best of Show awards will be presented. However, all students by their participation are already winners. For more information or to reply, please call (240) 777-2521.

Arab American Heritage Month

The Office of Community Outreach is partnering with Montgomery County Public Libraries and the City of Gaithersburg to host a festival to celebrate Arab American Heritage Month on Saturday, April 30, 2005 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the Bohrer Park Activity Center, 506 South Frederick Avenue (Route 355), Gaithersburg.

The fun filled festival includes henna hand painting, calligraphy, games, vendors, arts and crafts, folk dancing, Middle Eastern food, traditional instruments, live entertainment and events for the whole family. For more information, please call Ms. Yuli Estler at (240) 777-0024.

Fair Housing / Predatory Lending Education Forum

The Office of Community Outreach is cosponsoring an education forum to help residents protect themselves from predatory lending, home improvement scams, abuses in home equity lines of credit and other financial transactions that can endanger homeowners' equities. The lead sponsor is the Office of Human Rights. Confirmed cosponsors include Housing Opportunities Commission, Department of Housing & Consumer Affairs, Human Rights Commission, Commission on Aging, Commission on People with Disabilities and AARP.

The forum is free and open to the public. It is especially intended for individuals who have high equity values in their homes from demographic backgrounds that unscrupulous lenders may target, including seniors, widows and widowers, recent immigrants, individuals from ethnic communities and the county's historic communities.

The event is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2005 from 6:30 to 9:00 PM in the Third Floor Conference Room, Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville. For more information or to reply, please call (240) 777-3764. Registration suggested but not required.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

In conjunction with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the Office of Community Outreach will host a open forum meeting for organizations to learn more about other organizations and service providers. The anticipated outcome of this meeting is to produce a document listing the priority of concerns to the community and a booklet listing organization contacts, services and areas of focus.

The open forum is scheduled for Thursday, May 26, 2005 with an informal reception to begin at 6:00 PM and meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Lobby Level Auditorium, Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. Please call Shu-Ping Chan at (240) 777-2524 for more information.

Juneteenth Celebration

The Office of Community Outreach will sponsor the ninth community celebration of "Juneteenth" at the BlackRock Center for the Arts on June 16, 2005 with a program and reception from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The theme for this year is "The Historical Contributions of the Past With the Challenges of the Future." BlackRock Center is located at 12901 Town Commons Drive in Germantown.

Juneteenth developed over the years after the end of the Civil War and is known as liberation day for slaves. The term "Juneteenth" developed from the phrase "June Nineteenth" which designated the day in 1865 when Union Army General Gordon Granger landed in Galveston, Texas to officially free 250,000 slaves in the area. Since then, it is recognized as the day of emancipation. For more information about Montgomery County's Juneteenth celebration, please call Christine Clarke at (240) 777-2500.



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CommunityEvents

Muslim Women in the Arts

Exhibit until end of April. Open house and reception on Thursday, April 26 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in lobby of 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. Reply to (240) 777-2521.

Financial Literacy Forum

Educational forum on skills to maintain good finances and credit ratings. Thursday, April 28, 9:30 to 11:30 AM at Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office, 18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood. Call Myriam Torrico at (240) 777-3627.

Understanding Diversity Through Arts

Open house and awards reception on the Terrace Level in the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville on Tuesday, May 3 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Reply to (240) 777-2521.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Library events: Pakistani program at Germantown Library on Saturday, May 14 at 2:00 PM, Indian program at Twinbrook library on Saturday, May 28 at 11:30 AM and Filipino program at Silver Spring Library on Saturday, May 28 at 2:00 PM. Call Yuli Estler at (240) 777-0024 for more information.

Open forum for Asian Pacific American community organizations on Thursday, May 26. Informal reception at 6:00 PM, meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Lobby Level Auditorium, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. Call Shu-Ping Chan at (240) 777-2524.

Arab American Heritage Month

Family festival on Saturday, April 30, 1:00 to 4:00 PM at Bohrer Park Activity Center, 506 South Frederick Avenue (Route 355), Gaithersburg. Call Yuli Estler at (240) 777-0024.

Fair Housing / Predatory Lending Education Forum

Educational forum to help residents avoid predatory lending on Wednesday, May 18, 6:30 to 9:00 PM. Third Floor Conference Room, Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville. To register call (240) 777-3764.

Juneteenth Celebration

Celebration of "Juneteenth" or emancipation day. BlackRock Center for the Arts on June 16, 7:00 to 9:00 PM at 12901 Town Commons Drive in Germantown. Call Christine Clarke at (240) 777-2500.